



## *Arizona Game and Fish Department Wildlife Matters Legislative Monthly*

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### **Legislative Session Update**

## **Up, up and away: First 2008 bald eagle fledgling takes flight in Arizona**

After weeks of hopping and flapping, nestling bald eagles are growing up and beginning to take to Arizona's skies. The first 2008 bald eagle fledgling took flight recently from a cliff-side nest along the waters of Lake Pleasant.

The first fledgling's sibling is expected to take its first flight shortly, and the Arizona Game and Fish Department continues to keep a vigilant eye on bald eagle nesting activity around the state.

"Bald eagles are sensitive to human activity, so this is a critical time of year for nestlings," says Kenneth Jacobson, head of the Arizona Game and Fish Department Bald Eagle Management Program. "Game and Fish asks recreationists to stay away from bald eagle nests so that they don't prematurely scare a nestling from the nest. If a bald eagle is found on the ground, report it to Game and Fish promptly."

Eaglets demonstrate pre-flight behaviors of hopping up and down in the nest; flapping their wings; and hovering over the nest slightly. These exercises help prepare them for a successful first flight.

Thus far in 2008, over 60 bald eagles have hatched with more breeding areas expected to hatch in the coming weeks.

Outdoor recreationists are asked to help protect important breeding areas by honoring the closure of 16 areas across the state, most of which end in June. Various land and wildlife management agencies close the breeding areas from December through the spring to protect the state's 48 breeding pairs of bald eagles. Some of the closure areas are located near popular recreation sites. For a list of closure areas, visit [www.azgfd.gov](http://www.azgfd.gov).



# Don't pick up baby birds and other young wildlife



You may be tempted to pick up a baby bird or other young wild animal that appears to be on its own, but Arizona Game and Fish Department biologists warn this is not a good idea.

This is the time of year young wildlife can be seen throughout the state, and the department typically receives an increased number of calls and visits from good Samaritans who are trying to do the right thing by "rescuing" baby animals thought to be abandoned.

That can cause more harm than good.

"If you see a baby bird, rabbit, fawn or any young animal on its own, don't assume it's orphaned and in need of your help," says Randy Babb, information and education program manager for the department's Mesa region. "Usually, the parents are not far away. They may be out gathering food, taking a short break from their young, or you may have scared them away. If you remove the baby, then its odds for survival diminish."

For example, baby rabbits, if removed from the wild, will almost certainly die.

Newborn rabbits require virtually 24-hour care for any hope of survival, but even then the odds are slim.

Young birds on the ground may be learning to fly or may have fallen from a nest. Birds that have fallen from a nest will not be neglected; the parents will continue to care for them. However, if the young birds are in immediate danger, it is OK to place them back in the nest. Contrary to popular belief, human scent will not concern the avian parents.

Moving deer and antelope fawns and elk calves is not only bad for the animal, it is also illegal. Regulations prohibit possessing and moving native deer and elk due to concerns over the potential transmission of chronic wasting disease (CWD) to Arizona's deer and elk populations. CWD, a wildlife disease fatal to deer and elk, has not yet been found in Arizona but is in several neighboring states.

The best rule of thumb if you see young wildlife on its own is to resist the instinct to help and leave the animal alone. Humans are often the threat that scares away the adult, so the sooner you vacate the area, the quicker the parent will return to care for its young.

"There is almost never an occasion when you should remove a baby wild animal from its natural environment, as that may doom it from being able to survive in the wild in the future" says Babb. "However, on those rare occasions where a young animal is obviously injured, you should call a wildlife rehabilitator who can assess the animal and decide whether to move it."

The Arizona Game and Fish Department has a list of wildlife rehabilitators and their phone numbers available at the department's Web site at

[www.azgfd.gov/urbanwildlife](http://www.azgfd.gov/urbanwildlife). This section of the department's Web site also contains details about how to deal with truly injured, sick or orphaned wildlife.

If the injured animal is a large game animal or potential danger to handlers, such as a deer, javelina or coyote, call the closest Arizona Game and Fish Department office or Radio Dispatch at (623) 236-7201.



# Kofa Bighorn Sheep Restoration

## Project Objective:

- The purpose of the joint Department-U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service effort is to restore the Kofa desert bighorn sheep herd to numbers that will once again support the herd's critical and historic role as a source of animals for translocation to resurrect herds throughout the southwestern United States in areas from which they have been extirpated, primarily as a result of market hunting during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

## Herd Survey Update:

- The next annual herd survey will be conducted in the fall of 2008. Results of the 2007 survey are available in the December 2007 update.

## Water Management:

- As we approach the summer season, water and forage conditions remain generally good across the refuge and the greater Kofa Mountains Complex as a result of good winter rainfall. Historically, those conditions will begin to deteriorate as we enter the summer season.
- Department field staff has already begun routine annual monitoring of water catchments in order to preclude their going dry during the summer.



Desert bighorn sheep dead of thirst during 2002

Severe drought year, at Red Tank in the Castle

Dome Mountains, Kofa National Wildlife Refuge

- Department and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff are planning to install and monitor a temporary water site on non-wilderness refuge land in Engesser Pass at the east end of the Kofa Mountains. This location, which currently does not have a natural water source, was identified as a potentially important water location for bighorn sheep in the [joint Investigative Report](#). Biologists would like to establish and monitor a temporary surface-tank water to determine if the hypothesized wildlife use will materialize.

## Predation Management:

- As discussed in the April 1 update, KM03, the large adult male mountain lion captured in the western Kofa Mountains last October, was lethally removed by Department staff in late March after it left the refuge. KM03 became an offending lion under the Department's May 2007 "[Kofa Mountains Complex Predation Management Plan](#)", after having killed at least two bighorn sheep in a six-month period. Since its removal, Department and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists have downloaded the data from its GPS collar and visited



likely sites of kills. After having visited all the location clusters, the final verified list of kills for this lion is seven mule deer and six bighorn sheep.

- [On April 18, the Department announced](#) it was, for up to one year, suspending the lethal removal of offending lions captured and collared on the Kofa NWR while the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service completed the environmental assessment for its mountain lion management plan. Capturing, collaring and monitoring of lions on the refuge continues. The suspension does not affect wholly Department-resourced lethal removal of any offending lions captured and collared outside the refuge.

On April 23, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released its “[Public Scoping Letter for Environmental Assessment for Management of Mountain Lions on Kofa NWR](#)” in order to garner public input for the plan. The Service’s intent to pursue such a plan was first mentioned in the December 2007 update.

## Archery and rifle target shooting leagues for all ages

*Do you need some friendly competition? Do you want to improve your target shooting?*

If yes, come out and enjoy the comfortable evenings under the lights of the Ben Avery Shooting Facility. The Arizona Game and Fish Department is offering summer shooting leagues starting in June.

The archery league begins June 11 and meets each Wednesday for eight weeks from 6:30-8:30 p.m. on the FITA archery range at Ben Avery Shooting Facility. Leagues will follow the Federation of International Target Archery (FITA), the governing style for Olympic target archery shooting. Targets will consist of 3-spot or 4cm at 20 yards. Both youth and adult divisions are available. Youth is for ages 8-17. Adult leagues are for participants 18 and older.

The cost is \$60 for adults and \$30 for youths. Loaner bows are available but consist of introductory-type models only. Preregistration is required; contact Mike Raum at (623) 582-8313 or [mraum@azgfd.gov](mailto:mraum@azgfd.gov).

The rimfire rifle league (.22/.17) begins June 10 and meets each Tuesday for eight weeks from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. on the Small Bore Range at Ben Avery Shooting Facility. Participants will shoot at 25, 50 and/or 100-yard target distances. Scoped and open sights are permitted. All ages are welcome and encouraged.

The cost is a \$10 league fee and \$5 per night per distance. Youths, ages 17 and younger are half price. A limited selection of loaner rifles is available. Preregistration is required; contact Nancy Hays at (623) 582-8313 or [nhays@azgfd.gov](mailto:nhays@azgfd.gov).

To learn more about target shooting or the Ben Avery Shooting facility, visit [www.azgfd.gov/basf](http://www.azgfd.gov/basf).



Fall hunt regulations now available at license dealers,



## department offices

### *Fall draw application deadline is June 10*

Printed copies of the 2008-09 Arizona Hunting and Trapping Regulations have been shipped to license dealers throughout the state. The regulations and application forms should now be available at a license dealer near you, as well as at any Arizona Game and Fish Department office.

Regulations and forms can also be downloaded from the department's Web site at [www.azgfd.gov/draw](http://www.azgfd.gov/draw).

Don't forget: The deadline to apply for the fall draw for deer, turkey, bighorn sheep and buffalo, as well as juniors-only javelina, is Tuesday, June 10, by 7 p.m. (MST) – postmarks do not count. There is no online application process available for the fall hunts – it is a manual paper-permit process again.

Take advantage of the **“correction period”** by submitting your application by May 29. If your application has been received by the department by that date (postmarks don't count), and you've made a mistake on your hunt-permit application, the Game and Fish Department will attempt to call you three times in a 24-hour period and give you the opportunity to correct the mistake. After that date, mistakes can cause your application to be rejected.



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*Department Staff have contributed to this publication in the form of articles and photographs.*

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Legislative Affairs

